

**ALLAGASH WILDERNESS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

December 15, 2017, 9:00 am – 11:20
Cross State Office Building, RM 214, Augusta, Maine

Council Members Present: Josie Allen, Dave Basley, Peter Bourque, Brent Hardy, Chair, Melford Pelletier and Toby Pineo

Others Present: Tom Desjardin, Dave Rodrigues & Cindy Bastey (Bureau of Parks & Lands [BPL]); Matt LaRoche, (BPL/Allagash Waterway); Paul Johnson (AWW Foundation); Bob Johnston (AWW Seasonal Ranger); Greg Shute (Chewonki); Camille Denico (Haymock & Lock Dam Preservation); Kathy Johnson (NRCM); Jim St. Pierre (RESTORE & Citizens to Protect the Allagash); Jim McCartney (National Park Service)

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Brent Hardy opened the meeting at 9:00 am and welcomed new Council member Peter Bourque, who succeeds Alan Hutchinson as the Council member with knowledge and experience in natural resource planning & management. Peter retired in 2011 from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife where he was a fisheries biologist and director of the Fisheries Management Division. Peter is a resident of Farmingdale.

Brent asked other Council members and attendees to introduce themselves.

Review of Minutes of the September 15, 2016 meeting

Brent asked if Council members were satisfied with the minutes of the last meeting. Melford Pelletier moved that the minutes be approved as presented, and Dave Basley seconded the motion. Council approval was unanimous.

Operations and Maintenance Update – Matt LaRoche

Water levels: We had low water for canoeing to the end of October, then received significant rainfall at the end of October and regular precipitation through November. The river has been running over 1000 cfs since the end of October, and is currently at 1100 cfs. We met our October target levels for togue spawning at both Telos and Churchill Dams. These are: 5.5 feet above the sill at Telos and 926.8 feet above sea level at Churchill. Telos Dam is currently at 6.2 feet above the sill. Churchill Dam elevation is 927.4 above sea level.

Personnel: Staffing for November/December is three: Kevin Brown, Chief Ranger; Trevor O’Leary, Ranger; and Matt LaRoche, Superintendent. Jay Young went on seasonal layoff on November 2nd and comes back to work in the Waterway Christmas week.

Public use: We had the winter campground registration at Chamberlain Bridge on Saturday, and sold 40 of the 48 available sites that day. Most sites were rented for the entire winter. Camping use was down 6% for the year. More detail later.

Projects since September meeting:

- An energetic 4-week Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) crew worked on shoreline stabilization projects (rock steps/water bars) at Chisholm Brook Campsite and Long Lake Dam portage trail. (Photo shown)
- A table and tarp pole were installed at the new Breezy Point campsite on south end of Eagle Lake. (Photos shown)
- A capable MFS instructor gave 2-day basic and advanced chainsaw training at Churchill Dam. (Photos shown)
- The Eagle Lake ranger station was jacked-up and leveled, and logs on the east side and northeast corner were replaced. (Photos shown)
- The wood sheds at AWW Headquarters and Chamberlain Bridge were jacked and leveled, and the wood shed at Headquarters was re-shingled.
- A new dock anchoring system was installed at Churchill Dam and new docks delivered to the dam. Also at Churchill Dam, some above- ground sheet piling was cut off below ground level.
- The approach ramps were replaced on the snowmobile trail bridge between the parking lot and Chamberlain Lake.

- Roadsides were mowed at Churchill and Michaud Farm, and fields were mowed at Churchill and Telos Dams.
- The gable ends of the roof over the spring/well were closed in at Lost Popple Campsite on Long Lake.
- Rip-rap and stone steps were repaired at Scofield Point and Scofield Cove Campsites on Churchill Lake.
- 6000+ feet of boundary line were cleared, blazed, and painted north of Round Pond on the east side of the river.
- An authorized trail has been cleared and marked into the Tramway by the Division of Public Lands over BPL and Seven Islands ownerships.
- Telos Dam leakage project: An engineer for the owners of Millinocket Lake dam suggested placing rocks at the base of the dam to stop the leakage. It took 6 hours to install rocks in front of the skirting of the dam, and the leak appeared to have had stopped by the time the work was finished. (Photos shown) The leak was in front of the stop logs, and the whirlpool disappeared. We must watch for the effect of the rocks when the lake is at full pond. Rocks were collected from several places. The earlier suggested blocking with bags of hemlock bark failed as the bags floated and the bark spilled into the water.

Situations in 2017 (Summary for year):

- One death by heart attack at Nugent's camps. Jay assisted EMT's to the scene and transported body.
- Three attempts to locate:
 1. One winter fishing party failed to return to Nugent's camps. Rob Flewelling and Matt found them at Farm Island on Eagle Lake and escorted them back to Nugent's.
 2. Medical emergency at home. Jay notified the person and assisted the group out of Allagash Lake.
 3. Two young ladies from Unity College failed to return from a trip to the trains in April. Jay found them and pulled them out of the ditch.
- Snowmobile went through the ice at Webster Lake. Chris Silsbee assisted.
- Two noisy parties at Round Pond.
- Two Lost persons:
 1. Youth camper walked away from his group at Scofield Point.
 2. Youth camper got separated from his group on Mud Pond Carry portage trail and spent the night in the woods.
- Three boating assists:
 1. Overturned canoe in Churchill Lake,
 2. Overturned canoe in Allagash Lake.
 3. Swamped canoe in Chase Rapids
- One fishing rule violation.
- Two AWW rule violations:
 1. One for a snowmobile on Allagash Lake.
 2. One for removing an artifact at Churchill Dam.
- One forest fire at the Tramway.
- Two evacuations:
 1. One for sickness
 2. One for serious cut with a knife

One break-in through a door at Churchill Boarding House, fall 2017. (Brent referred to another break-in at the Boarding House - through a window.)

Two special activity permits:

- CanAm sled dog race – crossing the AWW at Round Pond
- Wood Turtle Survey – University of Maine at Presque Isle

Training: Chainsaw training for recent hires in the waterway (six employees).

Discussion

Brent asked Matt to explain the Allagash Lake situation. Matt indicated that a disabled vet drove a snowmobile onto Allagash Lake (and used a power auger) in violation of AWW rules. The vet felt that he was entitled to use his equipment on the lake. A warden issued a summons for the snowmobile violation, and the man was convicted and paid a small fine. Brent noted that the regular snowmobile community does not behave in this manner.

Lock Dam Update - David Rodrigues

Dave Rodrigues of BPL Engineering and Realty explained that an engineer and permitting consultant are now under contract to work on the Lock Dam repairs. The Bureau has met with the permitting agencies (Army Corps, National Park Service, Land Use Planning Commission, and ???), and permit applications are nearly complete.

Referring to a 10-sheet set of preliminary plans by Pinnacle Engineering dated 12/3/17, Dave described several aspects of the proposed dam repairs.

- The old culvert will be replaced with a new concrete box culvert that will accommodate increased water flows. The discharge channel will be riprapped to reduce the impact of the higher flows (p. G1). There will be a 3-foot outlet plunge to prevent fish from going back upstream (p. G2)

Brent noted that flows will increase from +/- 60 cfs to 100 cfs for +/-2 weeks in the spring to flush the stream bed and improve fish habitat.

- The view of the new inlet structure from the lake will be of a timber crib frame surrounding a bar rack of dark steel (pp. G3 & G4). The rack will be visible above the water line: more visible in low water and less in high water. The gates have been moved back from the intake to be less visible. Viewers won't see a lot of concrete.

Brent noted that the structure lays further into the existing ground than at present and should be less visible.

Dave Basley asked if the rack will collect debris, especially during October and November. The rack will need to be cleared to maintain flow. Rack bars are spaced about 6 inches apart. Matt said his crew should check and clear the rack as needed.

- The dam will have 2 gates (pp. G4, G5 & G6), which will help in fine-tuning water flows. The most visible gate features will be the hand winches and gear boxes, which extend above the top of the gate structure.

Dave Basley asked if the gates will also be inspected to make sure they are clear of debris. Brent suggested that a maintenance plan be prepared for the improved dam. He noted stop-log guides are included in the design for use in future maintenance work. The stop logs would be in place for maintenance, then removed.

- The new dam will be made of precast concrete components, fashioned off-site, delivered and installed on-site (pp. S1, S4, S6 & S8). Construction is expected to begin in September 2018, and cost \$512,000 for 2 contracts (engineering & construction) and \$30,000 for permits, for a total of \$542,000.

Dave pointed out that the design of the intake to be wider than the outlet culvert will help slow flows up to the gate and reduce suction on canoes at the dam.

Peter noted there were no trash booms in front of the structure to collect debris. Dave indicated there would only be a buoy line.

Josie expressed concern that the gate controls projecting above ground could be a hazard to snowmobilers. Matt indicated that riders shouldn't be on the dam, and that route should be blocked to snowmobiles.

Bob Johnston noted that there had been problems in the past with some precast concrete suppliers. Dave Rodrigues agreed to check into this.

Brent summed up the discussion by noting that the improvement plans address aesthetics, safety and fisheries. The long absence of adequate flow in Martin Stream has had a big impact in the whitefish fishery, which these improvements should address.

Operations and Maintenance Update, continued – Matt LaRoche

Status of Boarding House Materials & Repairs

Matt reported that the new siding has been sawed, but not yet delivered to Churchill Dam. Dave Flanagan indicated he planned to install the siding with a group of volunteers. The cost of siding and delivery will be covered by Viking Lumber and Robbins Lumber.

Matt explained to Mr. Flanagan that other work needed to be done before the siding could be installed: several wall studs and many floor stringers need to be sistered and the wall needs to be jacked into position in at least one place. This generated many additional questions from Mr. Flanagan about how much material and at what dimensions was needed. He was going to come and look at the job himself and make a list of material needs, but to the best of Matt's knowledge, that visit did not happen. Matt suggested that the Boarding House work was more than Mr. Flanagan had signed up for.

In the meantime, Kevin reported that the roof leaked by the dormer over the stairway during the rain/wind event in late October. The roof had been patched in 2015, and this was a temporary repair.

Brent alerted the Council that that the making of the novelty siding alone, which included machining a special knife at significant cost, warranted acknowledgement and appreciation extended to Mr. Flanagan and his group.

Toby asked if the October storm had produced many blowdowns. Matt indicated there was not much damage north of the Golden Rd.

Public Use, continued

Matt presented tables and a chart (attached) showing AWW camping activity for the 2010-2017 period. Camper nights reached a five-year (2013-2017) low this year. Brent expressed concern over this decline in activity. Peter asked about data for non-camping use (day use). Matt indicated that this data is collected by North Maine Woods at its gates and is usually reported to us in the spring of the year following the collection of the information.

Update on Boarding House Nomination to the National Register - Tom Desjardin

Tom reported on the conclusions reached by Michael Goebel-Bain of Maine Historic Preservation from his summer 2017 tour of the structures at Churchill Dam. Mr. Goebel-Bain concluded that both the Boarding House and the Storehouse are eligible for the National Register based on their association with the logging industry. The Boarding House is also eligible because it embodies distinctive characteristics of this type of building. The next step is for the nominations to be presented to the state Historic Preservation Commission. Once approved by the Commission, the nomination can be forwarded to Washington for final approval. The property may also qualify for nomination on archaeological grounds, but a reconnaissance-level historical archaeological survey is required to make that determination. Tom felt that the properties should be on the National Register within the next year.

Brent noted that we still haven't decided what we will do with the Boarding House and hopes we can focus on this at the next meeting. Tom suggested that the AWW and BPL staff could put together a list of what needs to be done and can be done based on ideas from staff, Michael Goebel-Bain and Terry Harper. This could be a place to start that discussion.

Toby asked if placement of the Boarding House on the National Register would require that the building be treated differently. For example, would it interfere with the work Mr. Flanagan is doing? Tom indicated that there is no punishment for work that isn't period perfect. Changes that are not visible are rarely a problem. With visible changes, the idea is to retain as much of the historical character as possible.

Status of Interpretive Plan – Cindy Bastey

Cindy summarized the work done by Consultant Bruce Jacobson and the core planning team. The group reviewed new material circulated by Bruce and held a phone conference at the end of November to settle on the core message and key themes that would be conveyed through the interpretive program. The group favored an emphasis on the wild character of the Waterway and appreciation of natural and historical resources to be seen along its course. Though still in draft language, these elements are as follows:

Core message: *The Allagash is a wild place where flowing waters reflect centuries of life, work, and travel in Maine's North Woods; it is a place set aside for all.*

Key Themes:

THEME I – *The Waterway is wild place set aside for all to enjoy, and to care for.*

THEME II - *Flowing waters shape the land and sustain life throughout the Waterway.*

THEME III - *People have lived, worked, and traveled in the Maine Woods since ancient times.*

Cindy distributed a sheet with examples of sub-themes and storylines that could help flesh out the key themes. She reported that next steps will focus on educational resources, including curriculum development. Two new contributors brought into to the project are an elementary school teacher from Pleasant Point and an illustrator who has done work for BPL in the past. Bruce expects to have a final draft prior to the Council's March 2018 meeting.

Election of Council Chair for 2018

Brent asked the Council to elect a Chair for the coming year as required by statute. Melford nominated Brent, Toby seconded the nomination, and the Council elected Brent as Chair for a second year. Brent commented that for all his years visiting the Waterway, including knowing the Nugents, he never expected to be in this type of position, but he enjoys it and expects to have more time to devote to the job in the coming year.

Meeting Dates for 2018

Brent asked the Council to set meeting dates for 2018, as this advanced notice seemed to work well for the group. The Council agreed to follow a schedule of quarterly meetings on Fridays - like that of 2017. Next year's meeting dates are as follows:

- March 16, 2018
- June 15, 2018
- September 14, 2018
- December 14, 2018.

Additional Items

Indian Stream Access

Brent added Waterway access at Indian Stream to the agenda, as the subject had come up at a recent meeting on the St John-Allagash region Public Lands management plan. Some meeting attendees reported that carrying canoes and/or gear +/-300 yards from the existing parking lot to the shore trail/bog walk was extremely difficult, and might be remedied by moving the parking lot closer to the trail head.

Discussion at the Council meeting revealed that the current parking location may be fine if visitors could drive their boats/gear/companions to the trail head, return their vehicle to the parking lot and walk back to the trailhead. This is not possible now because the Indian Stream/Lock Dam Road is gated between the parking lot and the trailhead. Moving the gate beyond the trailhead may be a simpler solution. Camille Denico noted that the existing parking lot is needed in its current location because it provides access to the stream at high water. She also feels the trailhead needs a sign.

(Scribe's Note: Discussion is hampered by lack of a map to provide a common understanding of the key features at the site and their relationship to one another.)

Tom Desjardin cautioned that making access easier has the potential to increase use and compromise wild and scenic character. If the Council wants to make a recommendation to Jim Vogel, they should prepare a detailed proposal and submit it as input to the management plan.

Kathy commented that Tom raised the correct concern. Vehicle access to the Waterway is limited on purpose, and this is an AWW decision, not a BPL decision. She doesn't want to see another Tramway parking situation.

Melford reported that he and Dave Basley attended the management plan meeting, and Jim Vogel had noted that the AWW has asked to have the gate moved. He feels Tom should present the request to Jim.

Josie suggested making a practical recommendation that solves a problem. Peter suggested working with a gate move.

Other

Brent asked for other comments before closing the meeting. Greg Shute commented on the development of curriculum materials as part of the interpretive plan for the Waterway. He noted that Chewonki had led some educational trips for youth from area towns, and he is glad to see that the curriculum-based effort is continuing.

Melford moved that the Council Meeting adjourn. Toby seconded. All agreed.